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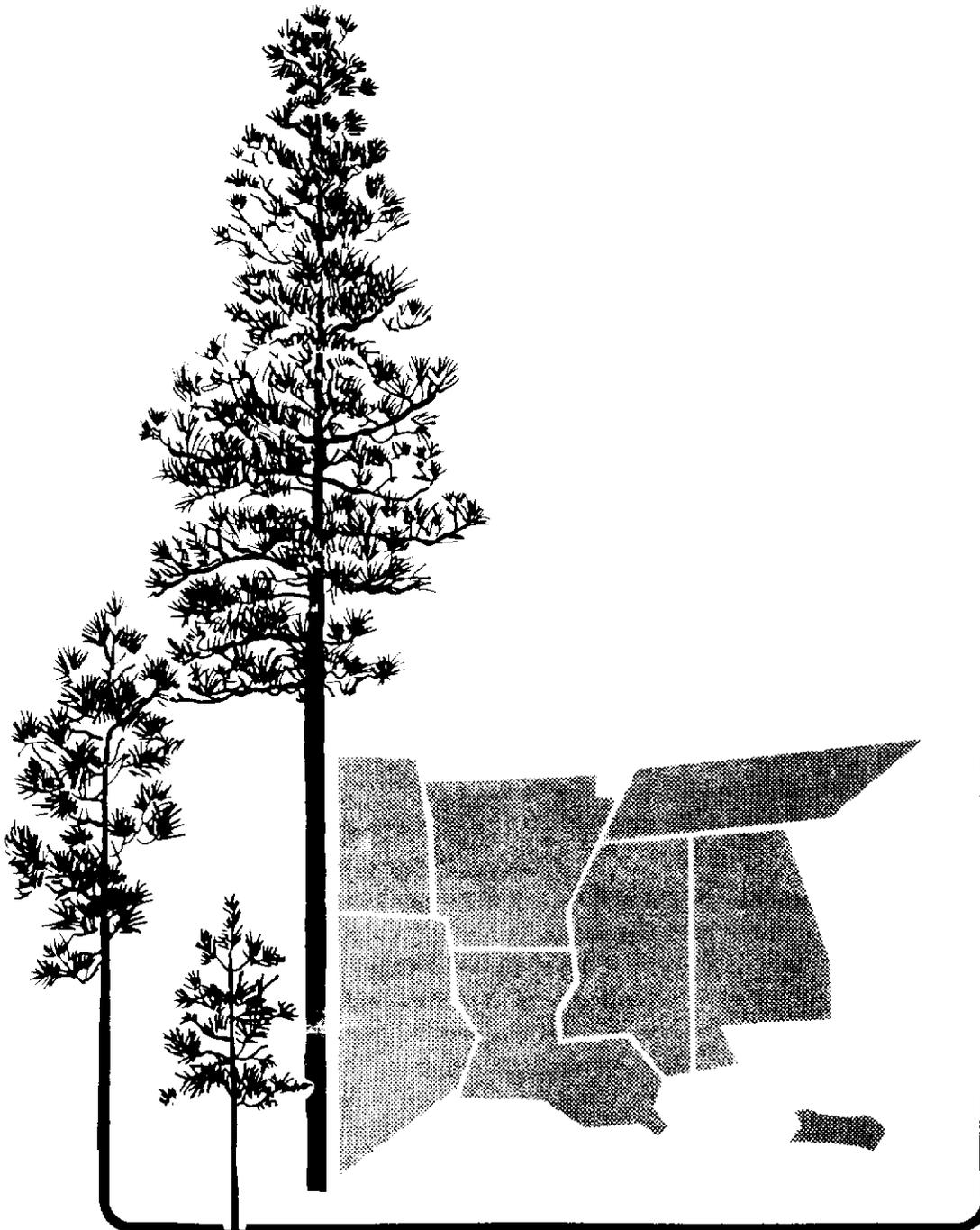
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INTERACTIVE ACCESS TO FOREST INVENTORY DATA  
FOR THE SOUTH CENTRAL UNITED STATES

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## **Interactive Access to Forest Inventory Data for the South Central United States**

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### **ABSTRACT**

On-line access to USDA, Forest Service successive forest inventory data for the South Central United States is provided by two computer systems. The Easy Access to Forest Inventory and Analysis Tables program (EZTAB) produces a set of tables for specific geographic areas. The Interactive Graphics and Retrieval System (INGRES) is a database management system that supplies access to inventory data at three levels of aggregation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Multi-resource inventories in seven states of the South Central region and Puerto Rico are conducted periodically by the USDA, Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station, Forest Inventory and Analysis unit (SO-FIA or FIA). The states include Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. A highly dynamic forest resource and a broad based user group require that the results of the inventories be made available in as rapid, efficient, and flexible a manner as possible. Traditional publications are being supplemented by providing users with direct access to forest inventory data via a table generation program and a database management system<sup>1</sup>.

### **TABLE GENERATION**

The EZTAB program is a menu driven system that is available to users interested in tabular information for specific geographic areas. The program compiles tables for any configuration of inventory plots, be it a circle, polygon, or combination of counties. Very often, a request is made for plots within a given radius of a location -- for example, within 50 miles of Selma, Alabama. The EZTAB program provides a set of 43 tables, including 25 "core" tables that are standardized in publications of the eastern FIA units. Subsets of tables can be selected as desired. If needed, SO-FIA personnel will generate EZTAB tables for users who forego direct computer access. A fee is charged for this service.

<sup>1</sup>USDA, Forest Service. 1987: Interactive data access manual. Unpublished manual. Starkville, MS: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. On file with: Forest Inventory and Analysis, Box 906, Starkville, MS, 39759.

## DATABASE MANAGEMENT

INGRES is a relational database management system that expands the ability to access forest inventory data. The INGRES system accommodates retrieval of information at three levels: county, plot, and tree. The system includes 27 county data sets for the South Central region, as well as 14 plot-level and 2 tree-level data sets for each state inventoried by SO-FIA. Data sets are accessible for the two most recent inventories of each state. Each county and plot-level data set provides access to a particular type of information, such as timberland area, inventory volume, growth, removals, biomass, and nontimber resources. Tree data broaden the flexibility for making retrievals, but additional computations are required to obtain population values. Database queries may be done using the INGRES Query Language (QUEL) or the widely distributed Structured Query language (SQL). More advanced options for INGRES processing include interfacing with high-level languages, report writing, and graphics.

## DATA ACCESS

Interactive access to forest inventory data requires only a computer terminal, a telephone, and a modem. Users are charged a fee based on the amount of computer resources used. The fee also includes the cost of a 2-day workshop that covers EZTAB, INGRES, and the SO-FIA computer system. Workshops are scheduled periodically to meet user demand.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The SO-FIA computer currently supports a variety of users that include forest industries, consultants, universities, and state agencies. For information about interactive access to forest inventory data, prospective users may contact:

Data Request Coordinator  
USDA, Forest Service  
Forest Inventory and Analysis  
Box 906, Starkville, MS, 39759  
(601) 324-1611